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1919

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VERSES

by

ESTHER
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VERSES

by

ESTHER
H I L L
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17

"Things come to me—
All of a sudden—
Like that!"



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A Road

*Oh! what a mighty load,
Would be ours without a road.*

*A summer road who must confide,
With drooping trees on either side.*

*A road upon whose humble breast,
The children's little feet have pressed.*

*A lover road, with white arms curled,
About the lovely pulsing world.*

*A road that never yet stood still,
But climbs serenely up a hill.*

*God's blessing on the road we tread,
And may He meet us on—ahead.*

To M. F.—Killed in Action

Here's the same small forest pool,
That he use to wade thru
In the little shoes he wore,
Days when he was made to.
And the grasses high and sweet
Cooling to his tiny feet,
Question all they chance to greet,
"Where has Laddie strayed to?"

He will never go again
Through the forest roaming,
Never will I see him come
Whistling thru the gloaming.
Somewhere under foreign skies,
Smiling still—my Laddie lies,
Yet to me his spirit flies,
Like a pidgeon—homing.

The Bride

OH! Benny Tom—
What have you done!
Because she has enbrodiered gentlemen
Across her back,
And flying storks on her breast;
Because her under lip is full and red,
And her eyes pinched at the corners;
Because her feet are like twin pidgeons,
And her words, like pomegranate juice
Drip into your soul;
There is no reason why
You should bring her here,
Where only the tea-pot is Chinese,
And the screen,
Back of which, your mother is weeping.

Peacocks

*From my nursery window I,
See the peacocks trailing by.
Telka-Din with tail a-fan,
Leads a gorgeous caravan,
And the rest with lofty mien,
Drag their trains of gold and green.*

*Oh! they make a frightful sound,
As they stately walk around,
And their voices, I have heard,
Scare a nicely mannered bird.*

*On my window curtains gay,
Tiny golden peacocks stray,
And they strut around my bed
Sewed in rows upon the spread.*

*Sometimes when there's company,
I'm allowed to peek and see,
Shiny silver and the rest,
Of the things we use for best.*

*But the people—
Where are they?
Only lady peacocks stray
Thru the rooms and choose to pass,
By our tallest looking glass.*

*I am small, but is it fair,
To see peacocks everywhere?*

To Pierette—Gone

This little candle
Burns for you.
I have placed it
Where it will see
Its brother stars.
I have placed it
Where your two eyes
Will welcome it,
And where your two feet
Will follow.

There are yellow pansies
On my curtains,
There are violets
In the furthestest bowl.
But out there
Where you are,
Are all the flowers
In the world—
And my poor heart
As well!

A Fairy

Once I saw a fairy.
It was late at night.
Dancing on my window sill,
In the pale moonlight.

Such a happy little thing
Didn't seem to care,
Just went right on dancing
As though I wasn't there.

I could see its little feet
Twinkle in and out—
(Dancing for a moonbeam,
Its lady-love, no doubt.)

Breathlessly I watched it,
All the long, long, night.
But when the dawn grew rosy
It vanished out of sight!

Two Miles Off Atlantic City

*Like a necklace rare,
Resting in His hand,
It lay sparkling there,
Just a strip of land.*

*I who stood in awe
Of this stretch of light,
Felt, or rather saw,
A Presence in the night.*

*What a lesson taught,
On the darkened sea—
What a message brought,
Home at last to me.*

*Light, a blessed thing,
Beacon of our souls,
Let it ever bring,
Warning of the shoals.*

Two Little Tales

I have laughed at the story
Of little Boy Blue—haven't you?
That he slept all day,
In a bundle of hay—isn't true!
I never believed that so little a chap,
Would pick out a hay-stack to take a nap—
When the pleasantest place was his mother's lap,
(There is something quite wrong in the tale.)

I have wept at the story
Of Little Boy Blue—haven't you?
That he left his tin soldier,
And little toy dog, is too true!
For I know of a case where a dear little lad,
Left all his playthings—and Mummy and Dad.
Little Boy Blue was all that we had—
(O, it must be true.)

Comfort

Why are daffodils today
Dressed so gay—
Do they hear the marching, marching—
Of my Dear?
Oh, the little happy things,
Dancing there in fairy rings,
Do they know the silent meaning
Of a tear?
Joyous golden ones arrayed—
Unafraid.
Dark despair infolds me—
He is gone!
When the Shadows gaunt and black
Torture me to call him back—!
Comes their elfin message,
"Carry On!"

There's Grey Upon The Water

There's grey upon the water,
That was sapphire yesterday;
And a host of misty voices,
Beggin' me "to come and play."

Oh, the eerie little critters,
I can spot 'em on each wave,
Tiny, slippery things a-skippin',
Over Davie Joneses grave!

Think I'd leave this bit of sand bar,
When the mist is on the sea,
For a mess of finny creatures
That are makin' eyes at me?

*Not while there are days to follow,
Golden days with sails aglow,
And the sun-burned children diggin',
Clear to Chiny, down below.*

*Then's the time I love to waller,
Like a bloomin' fish I swim,
Had an uncle once, that learned me,
Swum to Yarmouth—me and him!*

*Oh, I ain't afraid of seagulls,
Soarin' white a'gin the sky;
Or the way the wind comes screamin'
I'm a-settin' high and dry.*

*Chucklin' at them voices
Of the ladies in the sea.
But—there's grey upon the water,
And they ain't a-foolin' me!*

The Star—Soul

*It has been said
"Stars, are the dead—
That rise."
Inshrined they shine
Forever, in the skies.
Then thou art there!
And every prayer
I say—
Doth live, when thou,
Hath vanished with the day.*

I often muse—
Could I but choose
My place,
'Twould be where
I could look thee in the face.

Dear Heart, my tears
Through all the years—
Will fall,
But thou above
Doth understand it all.

The Legacy

Edwin, Nancy and Barbara—
I have little to leave you,
Though I take a great deal with me;
Your love,
Which is my most priceless possession.
Your respect,
Which is the joy of motherhood.
Your grief,
Which I cherish, knowing it is real.
Edwin my son,
In the secretary drawer, you will find
A little maid.
She wears a blue dress, and her shoulders
Are dimpled.
She was your mother.
Long since the dress went into cap strings
For you,

And the lace into a party bag, for Babs.
Nancy my child,
In the hall cupboard you'll find a book.
It is called "Love Sonnets."
Because you have the flat bosom of
An old maid,
And a secret antipathy for children,
Read it.
Babs my darling,
They are in the old trunk in the attic,
The little things are yellow,
But neatly folded.
I made them, even the saque.
They were for my first,
He was still-born.
When you have found my treasures,
You will have found me.
God bless you my beloveds, every one.

Poppy

Brave little poppy
On her hat,
I will cast my eyes down,
When I pass you.
I will step near—
For I have an umbrella.
I will pretend,
That I am unaware of you,
And will endeavor
To appear preoccupied.

*The rain has settled
In her hair and lashes;
It caresses her shoulders;
It has seeped cruelly
In her slippers.
Be brave, little poppy—
As she is;
I will hold the umbrella
'Till she finds shelter—
Then, I shall pass on.*

The Ruined Cathedral

*They have slain me,
And yet I cannot die.
I am lying here among the ruins,
Among the Ages,
I am lying here, since some
Blasphemous eruption.
Tore me from the very Gates of God!
Here lie I, and there bereft of diadem,
My Virgin,
Still with her arms held rounded out,
As if to hold the Child now empty quite;
And yonder aged St. Paul—
Standing within the Holy niche of Saints
He smiled, or seemed to.*

Now gaze upon him!
This is our grave, this debris—
Saint and gargoye fallen from their heights
Together lie, and close beside,
Poor Cheruben, of carved stone,
Lying so still, and smiling 'mid the ruins.
The Child—I see a dimpled arm outstretched,
Is buried here;
A bird has built a nest close by
Within a helmet,
And high above, where ceaseless shell
Has torn a window in the arch of God,
The sky, bending down.

Reach Out Thine Arms

*The very stillness of the hour;
The misty dawn that ushered in the day;
The overpowering smell of drooping flowers;
The vastness of the bed wherein I lay.*

*The drowsy ache of consciousness returning—
How still the hour—
I was not home—but where?
I turned my head—my arms in doubt and yearning
I reached for him—
And found him lying there!!*

*Dear Lord! that Thou should grant to me
That Minute!*

*My son! I would have fought to keep him then.
My heart cried out and all the love within it—
“A Mother now, a mother to all Men!!*

*A man among all men he fights today.
Its brave to be the mother of a lad,
And braver still to have them smile and say,
“She gave her country, everything she had!”*

*My son, my happiness, my ALL!
To Thee, oh Lord, I send my urgent prayer;
Should he too fall, like many other lads,
Reach out Thine arms—and find him lying there!*

Out In My Garden

Out in my garden stands Narcissus sweet
Like Harlequin, in sunlight patches bright.
With yellow flowers twined about his feet,
He gazes at the pool in mild delight.

Ah, would that Echo could be spared the pain
To witness this sad sight of Venus' scorn;
To love, to sing, to call to him in vain—
And die away, poor voice—ah! most forlorn!

Oh limpid pool why must you woo him pray
When lovely Echo bids him lend an ear?
Perhaps your sleeping surface will some day,
Her own forgotten image mirror here.

Out in my garden, Love has sadly strayed,
I tread so gently, and in pensive mood,
Seeing Narcissus in sunshine all arrayed—
While Echo gently weeps in solitude.

A Bairnie In The Hoose

Ye all may talk o'verious things,
Ye would'na be withoot,
Ye'd hang on to ye're tam's and plaids,
An' sil'er spurs—no doot.
But I would gi' my coo and calf,
An kill the fatest goose,
If I had for a single hour—
A bairnie in the hoose!!

Now Jamie lo'es his collie weel,
An' Donald likes his fight!
While Robbie tilts the Bonnie Jug,
Wi' cronies late at night.
Ah weel! that I could hear them say,
When asked, "An' where is Bruce?"
"Hoot mon! At last th' Lord has put
A bairnie in his hoose!!"

On A Tombstone

Where the grasses
Are high,
Where the humming birds fly,
Here lie I.

Where the pure daisies nod
I reach thru the sod—
To my God.

A century ago
I was laid low
By a foe.

One lil' rag doll, two lil' shoes,
Tree lil' frocks ob bloo.
De shoes is worn, de dress is torn,
An' de doll nigh bus' in two.
One, two, three, is de number ob plates,
An' de table is allus set,
Wid a extry cheer, lak she was here,
Les' you an me forget.

A Bold Answer

Miss Ann, says she,
Says she to me,
"When yo' grows up
What'll yo' be?"
Why! 'plies I, an' hesitates,
De President ob United States!"

A Child's Prayer

*Dear Father here on bended knee,
A little child doth ask of Thee,
To make me always kind and good
To Bless each mouthful of this food
My parents kind doth me provide,
And keep me always by Thy side.*

AMEN.

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